

Jurji Zaidan and Abdul Halim Sharar As Historical Novelists

Narrative techniques hold great importance for the appropriate creation of novel. They are important especially in process of writing a historical novel.

In the present dissertation an effort has been made to compare Jurji Zaidan and Abdul Halim Sharar as historical novelists. The aim of this dissertation is to underline the similarities and differences in the narrative techniques of Jurji Zaidan and Abdul Halim Sharar in their historical novels. The focus of the study is the contrastive points with special references to plot, language and style.

Narrative techniques are extremely important in the creation of historical novel. Jurji Zaidan and Abdul Halim Sharar hold a special place in the world of literature by virtue of being initiators of historical novel writing in Arabic and Urdu literatures respectively. They are both prolific writers with Sharar writing twenty nine and Zaidan twenty two historical novels. They are similar in the use of dialogue, soliloquy, scene depiction and epistolary technique, at the same time that the works show glaring disparities between the two novelists in the modes of narration and in plot construction. Historical novel writing was introduced in Arabic and Urdu literatures through the medium of English Literature, with Abdul Halim Sharar introducing historical novel writing in Urdu literature, and Jurji Zaidan into Arabic literature. Both writers were following in the wake of Sir Walter Scott's historical novel *Talisman*.

The aim of writing historical novels was to rouse the Muslims of the world, who had not only been deprived of ruling, but had been forced to become slaves from their earlier position of being masters. The cultural identity of Muslims was distorted and it was an attempt to remind them of their past glory that stories of the golden past were presented. These stories emphasize the numerous victories scored by Muslims over non Muslims despite their smaller numbers and logistically weaker position. These novels were written with the view to generate and restore faith and Islamic spirit among the Muslims.

Jurji Zaidan and Abdul Halim Sharar, through their writings, have tried to minimize the cultural and political downfall of the Muslims. For this purpose they have used the lives and personalities of great Muslims heroes, to pull the Muslim nation out of lethargy and lassitude. This technique can thus be considered as a positive technique in attracting readers, especially the youth, towards exploring their great history. By introducing it in the form of romantic narrative the two novelists have underscored the significance of the comparative study of literatures in different languages and cultures as part of literary criticism.

This research is expected to help students and teachers to explore further avenues of research in the field of Arabic literature, in general, and comparative literature, in particular. It is also hoped that a comparison of the two writers, belonging to two different languages, will provide a wider perspective for the analyses of different literary and cultural aspects in the works of writers.

The researcher hopes that his comparative study will serve as an important vehicle in discovering the social, cultural and literary differences between two civilizations.